

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 3437

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SUBJECT: CHANGES PREDICTED IN PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY: THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION PREDICTING MORE RADICAL AND REPRESSIVE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT COMES FROM A WELL-INFORMED JOURNALIST. HE EXPECTS THAT THE GOP WILL ANNOUNCE MOMENTARILY THAT PRIME MINISTER MORALES BERMUDEZ' POWERS ARE BEING INCREASED BUT THAT A CABINET STRENGTHENING THE RADICALS WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE NEXT MONTH OR SO.

1. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, FISHERIES MINISTER JAVIER TANTALEAN TRIED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PRESIDENT VELASCO'S FEBRUARY 28 ILLNESS IN ORDER TO BE NAMED VICE-PRESIDENT AND THEREFORE VELASCO'S SUCCESSOR. TANTALEAN TRIED TO COALESCE ELEMENTS WITHIN APRA AND THE FISHERMEN'S UNION POLITICAL ARM (MOVIMIENTO LABORAL REVOLUCIONARIO) INTO A MASS ORGANIZATION SUPPORTING HIS AMBITIONS. INTERIOR MINISTER RICHTER, INDUSTRY MINISTER JIMENEZ, INFORMATION CHIEF SEGURA, SINAMOS CHIEF SALA AND JOURNALIST ISMAEL FRIAS SUPPORTED TANTALEAN. THEIR PLANS WERE UNDONE BY MORALES BERMUDEZ WITH FULL SUPPORT OF ARMY COMMANDERS.

2. VELASCO IS APPARENTLY BITTER THAT HIS BEST FRIEND TANTALEAN TRIED TO FURTHER HIS POLITICAL AMBITIONS WHILE VELASCO WAS SICK. CONVERSELY, VELASCO IS DEEPLY APPRECIATIVE OF MORALES BERMUDEZ' LOYALTY.

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3. SOURCE, WHO HAS SEEN VELASCO, SAYS HE IS WELL. SOURCE BELIEVES THAT VELASCO HAS DECIDED TO REMOVE INDIVIDUALS WHO SUPPORTED TANTALEAN FROM THEIR PRESENT POSITIONS. FURTHERMORE, GOP INTENDS TO COMBINE SINAMOS AND INFORMATION OFFICE (OCI) UNDER GENERAL RODRIGUEZ FIGUEROA, WHO WOULD RETAIN RPT RETAIN HIS LIMA MILITARY REGION COMMAND.

4. MORALES BERMUDEZ WOULD RECEIVE NEW POWERS BY BEING MADE "CHIEF OF CABINET" WITH THE POWER TO CONVOKE THE MINISTERS. HE COULD APPOINT THEM TO OVERSEE SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEES. THIS LATTER PROCEDURE WOULD REDUCE GENERAL GRAHAM'S (AND COAP'S) ROLE.

5. SOURCE STATES THAT GOP WILL ALSO EMBARK ON A REPRESSIVE POLICY IN ORDER TO CONTROL LABOR SITUATION AND GROWING DISCONTENT ON COUNTRYSIDE (CAJAMARCA, ANDAHUAYLAS, QUILLABAMBA). HE PREDICTS THAT FOOD SUBSIDIES ON WHEAT WILL BE REDUCED CAUSING A VERY UN-POPULAR RIASE IN BREAD PRICES. HE SAYS THAT GOVERNMENT SIMPLY CANNOT AFFORD SUBSIDIES AND IS READY TO USE FORCE TO QUELL RESULTANT DIS-CONTENT IF NEED BE.

6. SOURCE COMMENTS THAT THESE DEVELOPMENTS WILL REPRESENT VELASQUISTA (FERNANDEZ MALDONADO, RODRIGUEZ FIGUEROA, GALLEGOS AND HOYOS) VICTORY OVER ANTI-COMMUNISTS (INCLUDING DELGADO OF SINAMOS WHO WOULD ALSO BE FIRED) AND OVER THOSE WHO WOULD COLLABORATE WITH APRA. HE ADDS THAT GOP WILL UNABASHEDLY ACCEPT ASSISTANCE FROM SOCIALIST COUNTRIES. IN ANSWER TO QUESTION FROM EMBOFFS, SOURCE DOUBTED THAT GOP HAD ANY INTENTION TO COMPROMISE ON AEROPERU-BRANIFF ISSUE.

7. COMMENT: EMBASSY REITERATES THAT THESE ARE THE VIEWS OF A KNOWLEDGEABLE JOURNALIST. HIS INFORMATION IS PLAUSIBLE BUT MUCH OF IT MAY CONSITS OF STRAWS IN THE WIND WHICH MAY NOT GELL AS THE JOURNALIST SPECULATES.
DEAN

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